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Special theme: "Climate change, biocultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges"

Implementation of the recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Human rights: dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and other special rapporteurs

Ongoing priorities and themes and follow-up

Information received from governments

Bolivia**

I. Introduction

1. Bolivia is going through one of the most momentous eras of its history. The force of social movements, of which indigenous native and peasant organizations are an essential part, has ushered in a new country; the water war of 2000 followed by the gas war of October 2003 culminated in the historic election victory of Evo Morales Ayma as the country's first indigenous President. The demand for the nationalization of natural resources and a reconstituted Bolivian State through a Constituent Assembly marked a clean break from the past from which would emerge a new country.

2. In this context, the Government is committed to defending, guaranteeing and promoting indigenous peoples' rights. Today, indigenous native and peasant groups have a stake in government and are involved in government decision-making. Indigenous and peasant issues, which in the past were treated separately, indeed,

* E/C.19/2008/1.
** The submission of the present report was delayed in order to include the most recent information.

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almost paternalistically, are now part and parcel of the national and multicultural identity.

3. As a result, the Government of President Morales has convened the Constituent Assembly to approve a new political Constitution for Ecuador[1] setting forth indigenous peoples' rights; that Constitution was approved in 2007.

II. Response to recommendations addressed to governments at the sixth session of the Forum[2] and at previous sessions

4. The most important measure in the area of natural resources was the nationalization of hydrocarbons, which resulted in a substantial increase in the direct tax on hydrocarbons, and subsequently in an increase in the economic resources of the Development Fund for Indigenous Native and Peasant Peoples established by Supreme Decree 28421. Under the Decree, 5 per cent of the direct tax will be allocated to this Fund. In that regard, the 2007 figures for the tax reflect just how much this Fund has grown. In 2005, the tax amounted to Bs.894,576,715.46 (about US$ 117 million), while in 2007 it rose to Bs.1,974,060,921 (nearly US$ 260 million). Thus, the tax has been used to fund projects in predominantly indigenous rural areas. Therefore, the development of natural resources directly meets the Millennium Development Goal targets of poverty eradication, universal education, reduction of infant mortality and improvement in maternal health, while ensuring the enjoyment of indigenous peoples' rights.

III. The Forum's special emphasis on indigenous children and youth, indigenous women, data collection and separation, and free, prior and informed consent

5. The Political Constitution approved by the Constituent Assembly is a milestone in the country's history, since it dedicates a specific chapter to the protection, welfare and advancement of children and indigenous women. It recognizes, for example, that indigenous children have a right to socio-cultural identity and to inter-cultural education that safeguards their own culture. It also recognizes that indigenous women have a right to safe motherhood with a practical inter-cultural outlook.

6. Another major step forward in the area of legislation on indigenous women worth noting is the access of women to land provided for under Act No. 3545, on land redistribution, and its implementing regulations.

7. With regard to consultation and participation, Supreme Decree 29033 of 16 February 2007 on consultation of indigenous peoples and peasants on hydrocarbon issues, was approved. It is based on International Labour Organization

[1] http://abi.bo/coyuntura/asamlblea/nueva_cpe_aprobada_en_grande_en_detalle_y_en_ revision.pdf.

[2] The recommendations to governments at the sixth session of the Forum can be found in paragraphs 2, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 33, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 50, 51, 53, 56, 57, 61, 65, 66, 71, 72, 74, 78, 81, 82, 95, 96, 103, 109, 110, 112, 115, 116, 118, 119, 123, 128, 130, 133, 137, 145, 146, 147 and 153 of the report (*Official Documents of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 23* (E/2007/43)). See www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_sixth.html.

Convention No. 169 and Act No. 3058 on hydrocarbons, which includes a specific chapter on indigenous peoples' rights. It should be noted that, despite the ratification by the Bolivian State of Convention No. 169 through Act No. 1257 in June 1991, consultation was never enforced nor carried out adequately. Decree 29103 of 2007 on the monitoring of the socio-environmental impact of hydrocarbon activities was approved almost simultaneously.

8. A draft regulation on consultations with regard to mining activities is being developed jointly with indigenous peoples' organizations. Mining is one of the most sensitive sectors given the increase in mineral prices on the market and the fact that some mining interests are inimical to indigenous peoples' rights.

9. The right to consultation has also been enshrined in the new Constitution.

IV. Obstacles to the implementation of recommendations of the Permanent Forum

10. The ongoing changes in the country in favour of indigenous peoples have been hampered in particular by economic power groups that used to wield political power in the country during nearly the entire previous era of democracy. Today, they have lost their privileges and are resisting the social changes. One of the biggest obstacles has unfortunately been racism. Particularly striking were the acts of discrimination that occurred in January 2007 in the Department of Santa Cruz, where groups of young fascists and Nazis, members of the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista, claiming to defend the department, repeatedly insulted and assaulted peasants.

11. Another major act of racism occurred in the city of Cobija, where groups of peasants were intimidated, threatened and attacked for not "defending" local "interests". However, the most dramatic event occurred in the city of Sucre, seat of the Constituent Assembly, where young university students attacked, insulted, beat and spat on indigenous members of the Assembly and indigenous and peasant organizations that supported the Constitution. Epithets such as "he who does not jump is an idiot" or "Indians are a mixture of adobe and llama" show how deeply entrenched racism still is in Bolivian society. The political opposition to the Government, feeding off social movements, has exploited this fact. Racism, under the pretext of safeguarding the "Bolivian nation" as a homogenous entity, has given rise to acts of persecution, violence and intolerance, the flames of which are fanned by circles close to the former power groups.

12. The acts of discrimination were denounced by the President of Bolivia and documented by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, during his visit to Bolivia from 25 November to 7 December 2007. In the preliminary note on his mission (A/HRC/6/15/Add.2), the Special Rapporteur noted that:

> "One of the main issues that drew the attention of the Special Rapporteur (...) is the serious persistence of racism and discrimination against indigenous people, and especially against indigenous women (...) in the attitudes of political parties and pressure groups, which sometimes incite violence against persons based on their indigenous status. Expressions of anti-indigenous racism frequently occur in some media, which often sacrifice the principles of objectivity and impartiality for the sake of political interests. It is a matter of

concern that the current political conflict in Bolivia has given rise to a resurgence in manifestations of racism more suited to a colonial society than a modern democratic State."

13. In order to combat this problem, the Government is currently carrying out extensive research into discrimination in Bolivia. The findings will be used to develop appropriate measures, including awareness-raising campaigns on the issue. At the same time, anti-discrimination legislation is being drafted that would provide for penalties for such racist acts.

14. In order to implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum, Bolivia must invest in the development of education and training programmes for civil servants at the local, regional and national levels. It also needs to disseminate the main instruments on indigenous peoples' rights among indigenous peoples' organizations and institutions and non-indigenous public agencies.

15. Notwithstanding the fact that the changes have been initiated by the social organizations themselves, as noted by the Special Rapporteur, obstacles are being encountered in the implementation of the Permanent Forum's recommendations at the lower levels of government, such as prefectures and municipalities of regions opposed to the Government of President Morales.

V. Facilitating factors for the implementation of recommendations

16. The social, political and economic context is very favourable for indigenous peoples and peasants because of the firm leadership of President Evo Morales Ayma, who has promoted the strengthening of indigenous peoples' rights and appointed indigenous representatives and persons to positions at all levels of Government.

17. There is no doubt that Bolivia's new Constitution marks a turning point. Indigenous issues are present in each and every one of the chapters either directly or as part of the multicultural approach.

18. Indigenous values of duality, complementarity and reciprocity, as reflected in *Suma Qamaña* (living well), distinct from living better, have been mainstreamed into Government policy. These values have also been reflected in the new Political Constitution of Bolivia. The concept of a plurinational State represents a sea change, as it includes the country's majority population groups that were excluded at the birth of the Republic.

19. It should also be noted that those values were reflected in the National Development Plan under the pillar entitled "Bolivia Democrática" (Democratic Bolivia) that clearly reflects the priority attention accorded to development policies for indigenous peoples and native indigenous nations. Such is the case, for example, of land, rural development and education policies.

VI. Policy on indigenous peoples' issues and other similar tools and mechanisms

20. Over the course of two years, the Government has issued some 20 supreme decrees in favour of indigenous native peasant peoples and three substantive basic laws to promote change (land redistribution, convening of the Constituent Assembly and approval of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). The fundamental change effected by the Bolivian Government is the new emphasis placed on indigenous peoples' rights. Such legislation, which was drafted with input from indigenous and peasant organizations, now promotes structural changes.

A. Convening of the Constituent Assembly

21. The Constituent Assembly was convened by Act No. 3364 of 6 March 2006; it was both in response to the long-standing demands of indigenous and peasant organizations/social movements and part of the October (2003) Agenda.

B. Political Constitution

22. On 14 December 2007, the Constituent Assembly approved Bolivia's new Political Constitution. This is one of the most momentous events in the country's history as a Republic, since it consolidates the changes occurring in Bolivia. The Constitution, which is to be submitted to a referendum, reflects the most significant progress with respect to indigenous peoples' rights. The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to food noted that the Constitution set an example worthy of emulation by all the peoples of the world.

23. The most important main areas of progress of the Constitution are set out below.

Plurinational, communal and multicultural State

24. This is an unprecedented development at both the national and international levels, with various nations making up a single unitary State. As a result, Bolivia has served as a model for other countries. In that connection, the international workshop entitled "Indigenous peoples, constitution and plurinational States" organized by the Andean Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations (CAOI) in January 2008 adopted a declaration that stated:

> "... we participated in this workshop, which took place at a time when South America is going through structural political changes and experiencing resistance to the empowerment of indigenous peoples, who are demanding and achieving political changes in the old nation-States that are increasingly privatized and denationalized; they are opening up new opportunities for participatory democracy and social equity that will enable the people to 'live well'/Sumaq Kawsay/Sumaq Qamaña and do away with neoliberal developmentalism."
>
> "We denounce the fact that, in our lands and territories of Abya Yala, we also have to tackle continuing conflicts brought about by the invasion of such

territories, persecution by judges and the police and increased criminalization of our rights and movements as a result of policies in favour of looting by transnational corporations supported by so-called democrats."

"We note that in Bolivia the indigenous peoples' movement and the society excluded from the Eurocentric (neo-colonial) policy have been fighting to bring about changes and it is the fascism of the right that is preventing, blocking, sabotaging and manipulating the mass media in order to prevent the President, brother Evo Morales, from implementing the changes for which the overwhelming majority of Bolivians voted."

25. For all those reasons, they agree and proclaim before Abya Yala (the Americas) and the world their firm resolve as indigenous peoples to integrate Abya Yala in order to reconstitute its peoples, and fight for the inclusion and establishment of plurinational States and multicultural societies.

Decolonizing Constitution

26. The Constitution sets forth the idea of thinking for ourselves without the imposition of other cultures and other ways of thinking.

Self-determination

27. The Constitution guarantees the right of all the country's indigenous nations and peoples and peasants to self-determination.

Specific chapter on the rights of the indigenous native peasant nations and peoples

28. While the Constitution adopts a cross-cutting approach to indigenous and native issues, it also contains a specific chapter on the rights of indigenous native peasant nations and peoples.

Health and education

29. The Constitution contains specific chapters on health and education, which are recognized as being cross-cultural, intracultural and multilingual.

Indigenous native peasant jurisdiction

30. The Constitution recognizes and respects this jurisdiction, which is no longer treated as only communal justice.

Official languages

31. All indigenous languages are recognized as official languages under the Constitution.

Communal democracy

32. The Constitution recognizes communal democracy as one of the forms of democracy in the country.

Indigenous identity

33. In order to avoid conflicts of self-identification, the Constitution recognizes all the nations and peoples under a single umbrella term: indigenous native peasant peoples.

Autonomy of indigenous native peasant peoples

34. The types of autonomy in this area formally recognized under the Constitution include the right to self-government and the right of self-determination of nations and peoples.

Land and territory

35. The Constitution recognizes, protects and guarantees community and collective ownership of the lands and territories of indigenous native peasant peoples and native communities of mixed descent. It expressly forbids large estates and clearly defines what constitutes a large estate and provides that the maximum size of a large estate (5,000 to 10,000 hectares) shall be decided through a national referendum. The Constitution further provides that property on which forced labour is found to be practised shall revert to the State and that the State regulates the land market.

Women's right of access to land

36. The Constitution embodies this right, which is already established by law.

37. It can safely be said that there has never been in Bolivia's history a Constitution providing clearly for indigenous peoples' rights. The new Constitution has included the rights established both in ILO Convention No. 169 and in the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights. It can even be stated that the Constitution goes well beyond the scope of those international instruments. Once the Constitution is adopted through referendum, there will be a need to enact implementing legislation (communal justice, autonomy for indigenous peoples, cross-cultural approach to government, etc).

C. Land Redistribution Act

38. Act No. 3545 of 28 November 2006 on land distribution has introduced a new approach to land. The Act provides for the distribution, through expropriation, of land to indigenous native peasant peoples, consolidates land regularization and the titling of native communal lands as collective property. The Act was an agrarian revolution brought about by the indigenous and peasant movements. In a nutshell, the agrarian revolution was achieved through land redistribution.

39. Here is another fundamental fact that shows the progress achieved in the area of indigenous peoples' land rights: in the two years that President Morales has been in power, a total of 10.2 million hectares of land has been regularized at a cost of $1.50 per hectare compared to the 1996-2005 period, when 9.2 million hectares were regularized at a cost of $9.66 a hectare. Months before the Land Redistribution Act, decrees 28733 to 28738 changing the unequal access to land and the land system tenure, were enacted.

D. Act No. 3760 of 7 November 2007

40. Act No. 3760, which approved the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, has become a legally binding instrument.

E. Eradication of slavery and liberation of the Guarani people

41. Supreme Decree 29292 of 3 October 2007 established the interdepartmental council for the eradication of forced labour and similar systems and sets free the enslaved Guarani peoples on the basis of an interdepartmental plan. This measure is unprecedented although the existence of these enslaved communities has been common knowledge. The interdepartmental plan will cover a total of 580 enslaved indigenous families that, according to government estimates of September 2007, are in the departments of Tarija, Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca where the Guarani people are located. The Supreme Decree of 28 November 2007 provides for the expropriation of 180,000 hectares. This process, which will take a few months, has already been started.

F. New development paradigm

42. Supreme Decree 29272 of 12 September 2007 approved the National Development Plan (2006-2011) that introduces a new holistic development paradigm, starting from indigenous education: living well. Four policy pillars are established to that end: a worthy Bolivia, focusing on areas such as poverty eradication, the equitable distribution of income, resources and opportunities, health, education; a productive Bolivia, that focuses on integrated productive complexes to generate employment; a democratic Bolivia, understood as the establishment of a plurinational communal State, where the people exercise control over social and community issues; and a sovereign Bolivia, making decisions without outside interference. Indigenous native peasant organizations are involved in all the pillars, especially the one on democratic Bolivia.

G. Regional development forums

43. In order to develop regional development plans consistent with the comprehensive approach of the National Development Plan, a number of development forums were organized in selected regions of the country. The views and proposals of the peoples and indigenous native peasant nations of those areas were solicited and reflected at those forums. As of 2007, four regional forums have been held (Amazon region, Pantanal region, northern Potosí and south-eastern Potosí).

44. All stakeholders of the regions, including non-governmental organizations, universities, municipalities and prefectures, participated in the forums alongside indigenous native peasant organizations. The forums also decided that development was not only based on production.

H. Right to education

45. Three basic measures were taken in this area:

(a) The Avelino Siñani education bill, drafted with input from indigenous and peasant organizations, which provides for multicultural, inter-cultural, bilingual and decolonizing education;

(b) The Juancito Pinto scholarship, under which Bs.200 is allocated to every pupil in grades one to six in public schools. In addition to preventing children from dropping out of school, the scholarship has been of great benefit to children from indigenous rural areas. A total of 1,321,821 boys and girls benefited from the programme; hence revenues from the direct tax on hydrocarbons have a positive direct impact on indigenous peoples' human rights;

(c) Under the national programme entitled "Yo sí puedo" (Yes I can), which was launched in cooperation with Cuba, over 23,000 literacy centres were established throughout the country, focusing especially on rural areas. In 2007, some 9,011 people were taught to read and write in Quechua while 6,029 were taught to read and write in Aymara. The figures show that the greatest impact was in areas inhabited by indigenous people. According to 2001 census figures, some 37 per cent of rural women were illiterate.

I. Right to health

46. Three fundamental measures were taken in this area:

(a) Under the national programme entitled Operación Milagro (Operation Miracle), also developed together with Cuba, free eye operations were performed on over 145,000 people, especially in rural areas with predominant indigenous populations;

(b) The Zero Malnutrition Programme under which mothers are given supplementary food targets the poorest municipalities that are the most vulnerable in terms of food security;

(c) The draft universal health insurance scheme designed to benefit in particular indigenous peasant individuals in rural areas.

J. Army equal opportunities programme

47. Traditionally, the army has been viewed as a tool of repression. It is now part of the process of change. In 2007, in order to stamp out the stigma of discrimination and combat exclusion, the army enlisted 25 indigenous women hailing from the eastern and western parts of the country under its equal opportunities programme.

K. Dignity pension

48. From 1 February 2008 the Government started paying the dignity pension established under Act No. 3791 to every Bolivian man and woman 60 years and older in the country. Payments are made annually. The beneficiaries will basically

be the overwhelming majority of the population, the indigenous peoples, who never enjoyed any pension income. This pension falls under the worthy Bolivia pillar of the National Development Plan, since it basically helps to eradicate poverty and exclusion.

L. Communal radio stations

49. The Constitution provides for the establishment of 30 communal radio stations. As of the preparation of this report, 23 communal radio stations had been established and seven were being set up.

VII. National institutions

50. As explained earlier, the Government of Bolivia now considers the indigenous native peasant peoples as a part and parcel of the entire State structure. Therefore, it sees no need for a specific body responsible for indigenous peoples' rights. On the other hand, a cross-cutting approach is maintained through the indigenous peoples' rights mainstreaming bureau that is under the Ministry of the Presidency. Apart from mainstreaming indigenous peoples' rights into public policies under the National Development Plan, the bureau is also responsible for raising awareness of, disseminating information on and providing training with respect to such rights. Work in 2008 will focus on ethnically sensitive indicators and a study will be conducted on the status of indigenous peoples' rights in five ecoregions of the country.

VIII. Training programmes on indigenous issues for civil servants

51. The Government of Bolivia has sustained inter-cultural sensitivity training programmes for civil servants. For example, the national personnel administration service (SNAP) has implemented training programmes at the diploma level for civil servants working in the ministries and decentralized government agencies. The programmes cover subjects such as indigenous history and culture, indigenous philosophy and thought, indigenous politics, power and authority and native languages.

52. Like SNAP, private and public universities and other institutions of higher learning have begun the important task of training suitable staff in inter-cultural issues and knowledge of indigenous political culture.

IX. Planned activities relating to the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

53. Basically, the National Plan of Action and the Political Constitution fully meet and comply with the goals, objectives and programme of action of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The Government of Bolivia has implemented in sector ministries specific programmes for the achievement of the objectives of the Second Decade.

X. Information and suggestions regarding the special theme of the seventh session of the Permanent Forum

54. The Bolivian Government welcomes the fact that the Forum has included the deep-rooted indigenous philosophy of "living well" that it is promoting.

55. We wish to clearly state the Bolivian Government's position on biofuels. In that regard, the President stated during a debate at the sixty-second session of the General Assembly on the environment that: "we should work together to see how we can save planet Earth, which is the most important thing right now if we wish to save lives and humanity (...). Yesterday, too, I heard, and tried to understand, some statements about biofuels and agrofuels. I cannot accept our use of agricultural products to power cars. I cannot understand how the fruits of the earth could be turned into junk. I believe that food should be for human consumption and that the soil should sustain life".

56. The document "Climate change and living well" is annexed hereto.

XI. Information regarding the promotion and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and suggestions on how the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues can engage in a constructive dialogue with Member States to promote respect for and full application of the provisions of the Declaration

57. The Government of Bolivia, conscious of its commitment to indigenous native peasant movements, granted legal status to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the adoption of Act No. 3760 of 7 November 2007. Accordingly, the Declaration no longer has solely moral and political force but also legal force, in view of its binding nature. Bolivia has therefore taken the lead in the field of indigenous rights, since it is the first country in the world to have taken this measure.

58. The adoption of the Declaration marks a new achievement for indigenous peasant organizations and has helped to substantiate their demands. For that reason, in October 2007 the Government and these organizations jointly held an indigenous world forum to mark the adoption of this international instrument. The Declaration, in conjunction with ILO Convention No. 169, the national development plan and the new Political Constitution of the State, constitutes the basis of indigenous rights in Bolivia.

59. Comprehensive work remains pending with respect to analysis, discussion and dissemination of the Declaration, which the Forum could collaborate on through the cross-cutting component.

Annex

Climate change and living well: Bolivia's recommendations to the communities and nations of the world

Unbridled industrialization

1. In his addresses to the world from United Nations Headquarters at the high-level event on climate change on 24 September and at the plenary of the General Assembly held in the same month, the President of the Republic of Bolivia, Mr. Evo Morales Ayma informed the international community that the system destroying planet Earth, owing to the excessive, unbridled form of industrialization practised in some countries, was increasing the ecological debt and destroying the way of life and the age-old cultures of Bolivia's indigenous peoples.

2. He stated that concentrating capital in the hands of the few was not a solution to the problems of humanity or human existence. Indeed, doing so caused so many lives to be lost to floods, interventionism or war, and so many others to hunger, poverty and preventable diseases.

3. He also mentioned that all of us will die if we do nothing to stop global warming and climate change: rich and poor, indigenous and non-indigenous, professionals and non-professionals alike. The money possessed by any country, region or capitalist, even a transnational corporation, will then serve no purpose.

4. There is no doubt that Mother Earth (Pacha Mama) is mortally wounded as a consequence of the Western culture of domination over nature and of capitalist and socialist accumulation models. The planet's natural resources are being drastically depleted as a result of overexploitation. Every year, industrialized nations consume 30 per cent more resources than the Earth is able to regenerate, thereby threatening both the survival of the planet and the well-being of humanity.

Paying the ecological debt

5. At the same time, an energy crisis is looming on the horizon. Irresponsibly, Western "civilization" has made all of us totally dependent on the overexploitation of oil. So dependent are we that we can no longer maintain this civilization without continuing to have steadily increasing supplies of this so-called "black gold". While the age of oil is coming to an end, we have still not found a form of energy that can replace it in the quantities to which we have become accustomed.

6. In response to these existential threats, the President of Bolivia urged Western nations to pay the ecological debt and to give up on luxury and over-consumption; to think not only about money and accumulating capital for a few families or regions, but also to think about life and humanity.

In defence of Mother Nature

7. To save planet Earth (Pacha Mama) from this rather bleak future, he proposed to the world that an international movement should be set up in defence of Mother Nature — a movement to help defend life and humanity and to save planet Earth. He also urged the United Nations to hold a world summit for indigenous peoples in order to gather together the proposals and initiatives of our peoples and nations so

as we are the repositories of wisdom and scientific knowledge in order to defend life.

8. Bolivia has therefore spearheaded the international debate on a proposed global strategy based on the values of the "culture of life", a culture embodied by the indigenous peoples and nations of the world. The aim of this strategy will be to resolve the fundamental problems of these peoples and to save the planet and humanity from the effects of climate change, the overexploitation of natural resources and a drop in oil and gas production.

Together we can work towards living well

9. The droughts, floods and other effects of climate change in recent years have had a severe impact on food production, health and infrastructure in Bolivia and in many other countries. These provide tangible proof that the poorest countries like Bolivia will be the first and the worst hit by the effects of climate change and possible wars over oil. These effects could fatally undermine even the most modest of lifestyle plans, not to mention their impact on "living well".

10. Thus, in response to the energy crisis and the looming threat of climate change, we must not only prevent oil shortages and increasingly higher costs of oil for transport purposes, but we must also mitigate their impact on the supply of many of the industrial products and services that we depend upon for our current lifestyle: cars; plastics; chemicals; conventional and other medicines; agricultural products, such as potatoes, soya, rice and sugarcane; and other foodstuffs produced using tractors, harvesters, insecticides, pesticides, industrial fertilizers and so on.

11. Taking into account the impact of such threats on the lifestyle plans of our nations, we must refocus our attention on strengthening the lives and economies of our communities so that, together, we can work towards "living well" based on our practices and customs and on our national wealth (fertile lands, clean air and water). In so doing, we can save ourselves from the self-destruction of Western society; from oppression, exploitation, contamination and insecurity; and from the vices of large cites: inhospitable places where we were forsaken by a culture dependent on cheap energy.

Harnessing communal energy

12. We therefore have to harness and strengthen the capacity of communal energy, starting by rebuilding our communities and nations with our own hands, our own hearts and our own minds. We cannot rely solely on international movements to solve our problems.

13. Whether or not we are in government, our families, communities and nations can strengthen the production of our own food, clothing, tools and other requirements. Like our ancestors, we can live on all the riches that have been bequeathed to us to satisfy our human needs and to achieve communal and national self-sufficiency without reliance on anyone else.

14. We can make our communities productive and sustainable once more by reclaiming our great wealth of seeds and species, encouraging the cultivation of foodstuffs with a high nutritive value, and promoting the production and consumption of environmentally friendly produce. We can put an end to the erosion of our lands and the destruction of our environment by using and distributing our

water in a sustainable manner and by promoting reforestation with a preference for native species.

15. Our economic and spiritual wealth is directly linked to the respectful use of the riches that our Mother Earth wishes to offer us. We must not wound or prey upon her if we are to ensure that we will always have something to eat and if we are to continue living as nations. Instead, we must build a life of abundance where there is harmony between humans and nature.

Production should meet the needs of communities

16. President Morales also told the United Nations that we must fight because food should be for human beings and soil should be for life, not for biofuel cultivation to provide for cars and for scrap metal. Our Mother Earth should not be turned into merchandise because of a petrol or diesel shortage.

17. For that reason, we must work to ensure that our production responds to our lives and to the needs and the sovereignty of our communities. We must organize production among self-sufficient regions to achieve self-sustainability so that each community has its own production and can exchange and distribute products with different regions at various altitudes.

18. We must achieve food sovereignty not only with respect to the products produced in our own community but also to those obtained through our mastery of various altitudes, whereby our communities can guarantee food for the entire population based on our own policies for the production, distribution and consumption of safe food.

Health, learning, communication and our own justice

19. Whether or not we are in government, we can start to make our own health system work in our communities based on how we have always kept ourselves healthy: namely, that the health of the community is as important as the health of the body, and that our food is our medicine. We should take precautions against illnesses before we look for medicines to cure them; and we should use our own natural medicines which do not cure one illness while creating another.

20. We must start organizing our own education system, or, rather, our own communication system, based on the teachings that we have always given to our children in our communities: i.e., communal learning to generate communal energy and to learn in our daily work that we cannot live outside of communal life.

21. We can start to be guided by our own laws and we can strengthen our own justice under our authorities in accordance with the codes, values, principles, norms and mechanisms that communities have traditionally established from generation to generation over thousands of years on the basis of the laws of nature and our philosophy of life.

22. Our philosophy is based on the responsibility of the community to take care of its members and their environment. Accordingly, each and every community member takes care of the health and well-being of each and every person without exception. Such is our consistent watchfulness, concern and vigilance, or "Tumpa" (social control), as we call it in Aymara. This is important for maintaining the harmony of the community.

Direct exercise of sovereignty

23. By turning our communities into engines for living well in this way, we can revitalize communal life in harmony with nature; we can start to organize our productive and communal life, manage community affairs, build our schools and public squares; and we can strengthen our organization and start to govern ourselves, our communities and our nations from our own communal governments.

24. We must exercise direct sovereignty through communal consensus. This is still practised in indigenous native nations, where consensus is always the method used for taking decisions, resolving conflicts and reaching agreements. We must all be in agreement for any measure to be prescribed. Each one of us must participate and have the same opportunity to be heard. We must all reach a consensus and come to an agreement among ourselves. We must all persuade each other and a decision must be taken with the participation of all, not by means of a vote.

Building a new life

25. In communal life we are not seeking liberty, rather we are building complementarity. In our communities no one should be free, because we are all interdependent: woman is completed by man, man is completed by woman, and both are fulfilled by nature.

26. We are not talking about justice, we are going beyond justice. Our fight is to achieve a balance between humans and between humans and nature. To talk about building a society with social justice is exclusive. We must do away with exclusion and preserve nature.

27. Beyond dignity, we are defending above all our identity, which is the foundation of our dignity. People who only have dignity are like plants without roots. Unless we defend our identity we will die, we will disappear.

28. Many people have told us that we need to build new societies. But that is exclusive. We need to build a new life, a life of harmony not only between people but, fundamentally, between humans and nature. That is not the same as building a new society.

A life of harmony in our communities

29. We must therefore proceed on the basis of the experience of our indigenous communities and the "culture of life", whereby life is communal, harmonious and self-sufficient, and the balance between human beings and nature, together with the sovereignty of communities, is the basis of life.

30. We must proceed on the basis of our experience of:

- Saving life and protecting Mother Nature as we would our mother, daughter or sister, rather than treating water, animals, plants, genes and other aspects of life like merchandise;
- Working together for society and our families and sharing, singing and dancing, as we continue to do in our communities, rather than working from dawn to dusk in a smallholding or performing individual labour;
- Deciding ourselves what, how much and how to produce, rather than allowing the market, like a new boss, to decide for us;

- Producing for the community and providing for our families, rather than feeding those who live in cities and rich countries and producing more cheaply for their benefit;
- Ensuring life for our children and for our children's children, and saving the planet using our stone and our own trees, our quinoa, potatoes and cassava, our kidney beans, broad beans and corn, and our bigleaf mahogany, root vegetables, coconuts and coca, rather than eroding the land, committing outrages against nature and, in 30 to 50 years' time, using up all our oil, iron, tin and lithium and all other non-renewable natural resources necessary for "modern development", whether or not this is "sustainable" or "harmonious";
- Managing to live well, sharing what we produce among our lands at various altitudes, and among our communities and societies at the national, continental and global levels, rather than allowing our lives to continue to be the same or worse by selling ever more cheaply to, and buying ever more expensively from, the national or foreign market.

31. We talk about "living well" because we are not trying to live better and we do not wish anybody to live better. "Living better" means accepting that some can live better than others. But if we live better and see others living worse, that is not living well.

32. Doing without work is not living well; lying is not living well; exploiting and subjecting your neighbours to your will might allow you to live better, but that is not living well; destroying nature might perhaps allow you to live better, but that is not living well: for what we are seeking is a life of harmony between humans and nature.

Saving planet Earth to save humanity

33. Thus, whether or not we are in government, together we can make decisions and be the masters of our own destinies; and together we can assume the readiness and the responsibility to live well bequeathed to us by our ancestors so that we can introduce across the board a culture of patience, a culture of dialogue and, fundamentally, a culture of life.

34. The Government of Bolivia's proposal for living well not only contributes to defending our families but also to defending life and Mother Earth so that we may live in harmony with her. For when we talk about Mother Earth, we are talking about planet Earth. In that respect, it is a matter of joining forces to save planet Earth in order to save humanity.